

The Mystery of the Silver Dagger

By Randall Parrish

Author of
"The Strange Case of Cavendish"

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ACTION! ACTION!

Adventure—romance—mystery—battle, murder and sudden death! Well, rather. And action, action, action—on every page. That's Randall Parrish's new story, "The Mystery of the Silver Dagger."

Suppose you were an American diplomat and you fell in love at first sight with a wonderful, mysterious girl who was apparently deep in an international revolutionary conspiracy and you had the identity of a famous crook thrust upon you and you found one of the chief conspirators dead from a stab with the mysterious girl's silver dagger hatpin! And suppose you set to work to break up the conspiracy and solve the murder and win the girl—wouldn't you be busy? Well, that's this hero and this hero's job.

As to Randall Parrish, all novel-readers know him and his stories. And this is one of his best.

CHAPTER I.

The Message in the Box.

Anticipating the possibility of my train arriving late, I had named the hour of my meeting with Cummings as three o'clock, and, in consequence of our reaching the city exactly on time, was compelled to loiter idly about the hotel for an hour. However, in passing through the corridor my attention was attracted by an unique curiosity shop occupying a small side room, and, merely to pass the time pleasantly, I entered and began examining the strange collection of wares on display.

There were several articles I lingered over, tempted to purchase, but drifted on, rather undecided, until my eyes perceived a very quaint lacquered jewel box, of a class of workmanship quite unusual. The proprietor, perceiving my interest, joined me.

"The jewel box attracts you," he said pleasantly, opening the case and bringing it forth. "You have love for such things?"

"A deep interest at least," I admitted, taking the article from his hand, "a collector in an amateur way. What is the workmanship—surely not Japanese?"

"No," smilingly. "Although positively I cannot answer as to its origin. The inscription, which can only be read with a microscope"—he traced with his finger—"is ancient Arabic, but no wild Arab ever did the lacquer."

"Yet so strange a curio must have a history, an imaginary one, at least. What is the story?"

"Positively none," he admitted regretfully. "The fact is, this article was found by a chambermaid in one of the hotel rooms, and turned in to the manager. He made every effort to trace the guests, only to learn that they, two men, by the way, had registered falsely. He even advertised, but with no response, and finally, after thirty days, was persuaded to accept my offer for the article."

"You have put a price on this?"

"Yes, ridiculously low, no doubt, yet bringing me a good profit."

He named a price, and, still with the box in my hands, I yielded to the temptation, and bought it. The article was sufficiently small to find lodgment in an overcoat pocket, and, as Cummings appeared a little later, was soon forgotten in the earnestness of our conversation. We later had dinner together, and attended the theater in company, my mind so occupied with other matters that I scarcely once thought of the strange purchase I had made, which remained securely hidden. It was only after returning to my own room, then nearing midnight, that it was again recalled to memory.

Only an idle curiosity and a feeling of sleeplessness induced me to draw the article forth, and remove its wrappings, but the sight served immediately to increase my interest. It was certainly a wonderful find, artistically beautiful, and most unusual in design. There was a mystery that must have exercised a strange spell over my imagination, for I dreamed of the long-dead workman who fashioned it, forgetful of the passing night hours. A clock somewhere in the neighborhood struck, and I counted twelve, arousing myself. Perhaps I was already half sleeping, for as I turned to rise my sleeve struck the box at the edge of the table, and before I could prevent the fall, it lay upon the floor at my feet.

As I stooped hastily to recover the overturned box, I was astounded to discover the bottom slipped partially aside, as though some secret spring had been touched, revealing so narrow a receptacle that the ordinary eye would never suspect the possibility of its existence. Not only was there a false bottom, but the opening revealed a closely folded paper. I grasped this quickly, a thrill running through me. What ancient and long-buried message was about to be unfolded?

But no! This was plainly modern—a clean, white sheet, no folded parchment of old, but some mystery of yesterday. There was writing there, in Spanish, so faintly traced I could barely decipher the words, yet clearly revealed as of this day and generation. I know Spanish fairly well, having had a year in Mexico City, yet it required some time before I could puzzle out the message on this sheet. The paper had been torn, seemingly sundered from a much longer letter, and preserved merely because of the specific address and instructions it contained. Beyond doubt all else had been destroyed. What remained may have been sufficient guidance to the party who had the benefit of what went before in the original epistle, but was obscure to anyone else. Yet it was modern, something relating to this very time, a menace; something to be grasped and understood. This conviction absolutely gripped me. I stared at the rather sinister words, blindly groping at what lay hidden behind them, instinctively scenting a conspiracy of evil which I could not determine. All unintentional I had stumbled into a clew which might lead to startling results, yet it seemingly gave me no hint of who was involved, or of its real nature. I put the words together, weighing each one with care as to its exact meaning, and read them over with increased bewilderment. The torn fragment began and ended abruptly; I could only guess at its meaning, yet the impression left upon my mind was both sinister and menacing. I wanted to know more.

108 sailed Saturday from Stockholm. Will deposit letter of credit with Krantz to your order. Amount ample all needs. See to this at once, and advise 876 Gans, so as to be no delay. Two raps, three—Cervantes. Waldron favors action this month; suggest Watonia. Can you be ready? Use South A code.

That this letter was authentic I had no doubt, nor was its meaning altogether obscure in the light of certain events. Several allusions were familiar to me and these were what caused my earlier suspicions to crystallize into probability. It bore all the earmarks of a plot, a revolutionary plot, and one



Questioned Him Relative to the Mysterious Box.

not yet brought to consummation. To be sure the note was undated, and the box had been left at the hotel thirty days before. Yet the Watonia was certainly the name of a ship and to my memory suggested Central American trade. This did not necessarily imply that the conspirators had abandoned their purpose. More likely they were not quite ready in time to operate on the sailing date of that particular ship. Some delay had occurred, and, possibly, even now prompt action might overturn all their plans. I undressed and went to bed, but not to sleep, for the darkness brought new thoughts and suggestions for the morrow.

I was still in government employ, although unassigned, and felt this discovery to be a direct call upon my service. While my first inclination should naturally have been to turn the whole matter over to the proper bureau for investigation, two facts led me in another direction—I was sufficiently young to seek adventure, and I desired to verify my suspicions before creating any false alarm.

As I rested there, sleepless, staring up at the black ceiling, the words of the strange fragment of letter remained vividly before me. Little by little I dug at the truth, coming finally to this conclusion: "108" was, no doubt, the recognized number of some agent who had been dispatched to America on a special errand to the conspirators in this country. He had sailed Saturday, a month ago, or more, and must have long since arrived at some port, bringing with him instructions not to be entrusted to the mail, and sufficient money, in form of letter and credit, with which to finance whatever nefarious scheme of revolution might be contemplated. This money

was to be paid out to the authorized party through a man named Krantz. Who was Krantz? There was a well-known banking firm, Kulb, Krantz & Co., in Wall Street, and it was quite probable these might prove the ones involved, although to my knowledge they had no outward junta connections of this nature. "Gans" was evidently a street, although I could recall none bearing so peculiar appellation, while the password was in itself proof almost positive as to the South or Central American sympathies of the conspirators.

These facts were fairly clear as I thus weaved them together, but they were rendered more damning by the other name mentioned—Waldron. If this was Ivan Waldron, I had good reason to know the fellow, and to connect his activities with any scheme destined to embarrass the government. He was a professional agitator of the most pronounced type, a socialist radical, who in the past had openly advocated opposition to all law and order. Moreover, the fellow had a large and desperate following, to whom he was a high-priest. He was reported to be a Russian by birth, but spoke English without an accent, and I felt no doubt but what a sufficient amount of money would engage his interest in any desperate cause. The desire to "get him" added zest to my interest in the affair. If he was actually at the head of these fellows, these plotters against the neutrality of the United States, the catch would be worth while.

As soon as possible next morning I sought out Burke, the manager of the hotel, with whom I had a speaking acquaintance, and, without confiding the extent of my discovery, questioned him relative to the mysterious box, and the guests who left it behind. Two men, he said, both well dressed, but with nothing particularly to distinguish them, had registered together late in the afternoon of Friday, September 27, and on request had been assigned to one room with twin beds and a bath. The larger man, who had inscribed himself as "P. S. Horner, Detroit," alone had a bag; his companion, known to the hotel as "Gustave Alva, Toledo, Ohio," being without baggage. The bill was paid the next morning by Horner, and the two departed together. It was an hour later when the chambermaid on that floor reported finding the box in the room vacated. After holding it for a day or two in expectation that it might be called for, no such inquiries being made, the hotel endeavored to trace the men, but to no avail. The fellows had either falsely registered, or were entirely unknown where they claimed residence. The first was the most probable condition. After thirty days, and having exhausted all reasonable efforts to find the rightful owner, the hotel felt legally justified in selling the trinket. That was all Burke knew of the matter, and his interest in it was not keen.

I am inclined to think now that I went at the problem without much system, and that any success achieved was through pure accident. During the forenoon I dropped in upon Clement Breckenridge, cashier of the Dover's National bank. We had been classmates at college, and I generally called on him when in the city. This time I led the conversation to Kulb, Krantz & Co., on the pretense that I had received mail from them relative to some recommended investment. Clement knew Krantz well and favorably, and my probing elicited the information that the man was Austrian by birth, but a naturalized citizen, rather deeply interested in political matters. If his sympathies were at all revolutionary he had carefully refrained from any such open expression. The firm had made a specialty of handling South American business, and had intimate financial connections in both Rio and Buenos Aires. The company ranked high in financial circles.

"The present war must have cost them a rather heavy loss," I hazarded. "However, this is nothing to me. By the way, Clement, do you chance to know of a Gans street in this town?"

"Gans? That is a new one on me. Try the city directory—there on the edge of the desk."

The name was not to be found, nor any other approaching it in sound or spelling, and I finally drifted out onto the street, really no wiser than when I first entered. I made one more effort, however, telephoning to a detective sergeant whom I knew well, as to the present whereabouts of Ivan Waldron. The last heard of Waldron, he was in West Virginia, speaking to striking miners; that was less than a week ago; he had not been seen in the city since.

Enter the heroine.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

And There You Have It.

Elizabeth, when asked the ages of her two brothers, answered, "I am bigger than the littlest one and littler than the biggest one."

The American Legion

Copy for This Department Supplied by the American Legion News Service.

POOR LEAD TO OBTAIN SPLIT

Attempt to Arouse Indignation Over "Horror on the Rhine" Proves Dismal Failure.

"The Germanophile attempt to arouse American indignation over 'the horror on the Rhine' and thereby to lead to a split, spiritual rather than diplomatic, between America and her recent allies has failed of its purpose in precisely the same way that German propaganda in this country failed in every one of the years between 1914 and 1918," says an editorial in the American Legion Weekly.

"The truth is merely that the Germans do not know how to go about it. 'Kultur' obviously does not include any knowledge of the fine art of getting something over, a fact amply attested by the reflex action which accompanied the present attempt. The Von Mach style of persuasiveness is no more subtle than the efforts of a St. Bernard puppy to stand up on a hardwood floor. It is flattering the Von Mach type of 'boring from within' to call its insidious. Insidious it is, however, in its intent if not in its application.

"Dr. Von Mach has proved himself a poor servant of his country, whether he regards his country as America or Germany. He is a poor American for having tried to win America over to the point of view of the unrepentant nation to defeat whose government 100,000 Americans gave their lives, for attempting to resurrect a hyphen that was theoretically buried just three years ago. He is a poor German because his clumsiness has served only to arouse America to the fact that she is still at war with Germany."

POST WINS ON GOLDEN CALF

Two-Headed Animal Aids in Raising Organization's Funds From \$100 to \$1,500.

The Golden Calf of the Twentieth century has been discovered by the American Legion post at Fredericksburg, Va., which owes an increase in its working capital from \$100 to \$1,500 to a two-headed juvenile cow, in full title to which the post invested its scant \$100 last fall.

Having induced a Westmoreland county farmer to part with the freak animal for this sum, a special levy of various small amounts was made upon the treasury to buy nourishment for the calf. Then came the Virginia state fair in Richmond and the calf was in full bloom, eating both his heads off and waxing fat withal.

The Fredericksburg post put him on exhibit, charging a suitable fee. When the fair was over and the dust had settled, the post treasury contained \$1,500—the accrued earnings of



Two-Headed Calf That Put Virginia Post on Road to Wealth.

the calf—and all this for doing nothing but standing still and being inspected.

It was recently that the representative of a large circus made his offer of \$150 for the animal and it was accepted. There is a rumor that the excitement of travel and late hours have affected the calf's health and that he is a poor insurance risk. However, as the old Romans had it, caveat emptor.

The post plans to reinvest the \$1,500 as soon as some other such good security as the calf is found.

Legion Men Among the Miners.

The activity of the American Legion in the mining districts of southeast Kansas is another pertinent proof that the misunderstanding between labor bodies and the ex-service men's organization has been dissipated. At Seaman, Kan., the climax of the eight-hour day celebration of the miners in District 14, was reached in a ball at the Legion hall, under the auspices of Francis Ellison Post. Another instance is the almost unprecedented growth of Clarence Smith Post No. 272 at Weir. From a membership of 21 ex-service men in 1920, a total of 112 has been enrolled in 1921 thus far.

LEGION ROLLERS UNDER THEM

Ex-Service Men Promptly Halt Exploitations of Pro-German Troublemakers.

In response to the warning issued by their national commander, F. W. Galbraith, Jr., American Legion members in many parts of the country have been active in fighting against efforts of pro-Germans and other hyphenated persons to drive a wedge between America and her allies in the World war.

Twenty-five thousand patriotic citizens of New York attended the "All American Meeting for God and Country," which was held in Madison Square Garden under the auspices of the Legion, as a protest against a previous pro-German meeting, said to be for the purpose of creating sentiment against the alleged "Horror on the Rhine."

When word was received in Philadelphia that Dr. Edmund von Mach, notorious German propagandist, was planning to hold a meeting in that city, Legion members and other patriotic citizens opposed the proposition and succeeded in blocking the scheme.

Similar action was taken by the Legion and various societies in Indianapolis. Among the organizations cooperating with the Legion was the national executive committee of the American Gymnastic union, composed of a large membership of citizens of German extraction, which insisted upon unhyphenated citizenship and scored Von Mach and George Sylvester Viereck. On the same day the Indianapolis board of public works announced it would not permit the use of its large convention hall for the proposed Von Mach meeting.

Learning that Louisville was on the proposed itinerary of Doctor Von Mach, the Kentucky department of the Legion instructed posts to use "every lawful means practicable to stop the threatened invasion of Boche propagandists." The Kentucky Legion's bulletin also warned against the activities of Viereck.

Legion posts have also opposed the hyphenates in Chicago, Cleveland, Omaha, Cincinnati and Milwaukee.

THREE VOICES AT ONE TIME

Minneapolis Legion Man Can Sing Tenor, Bass and Baritone Parts Simultaneously.

Wonder voices have been heralded the world over, at least since the inception of the press agent. But it was left for Joe Kaufman, a former army sergeant and an American Legion member in Minneapolis, Minn., to sing the first male trio simultaneously, carrying the parts alone with the same harmony and control of three singers.

Kaufman is a government music student.

The secret of Kaufman's unusual accomplishment has baffled voice experts as well as himself. Several years ago he discovered his ability to produce overtones which gave the sound of more than one part. He entered the MacPhail school at Minneapolis as a government student and, as his voice strengthened and became clearer, he developed the curious trio.

The only case remotely similar to that of Kaufman, according to his instructor in the government school, is that of a woman singer in whose voice could be distinguished one separate overtone, over which she had practically no control. The former soldier in some way has separated and controlled tenor, bass and baritone parts simultaneously.

LEGION MAN BUSY WITH B'S

Buckeye Boy Bends, Bows and Bows Bad and Beautiful Bonus Boosting Babble.

"Apt alliteration's artful aid" was not neglected when an Akron (O.) member of the American Legion spun the following bonus yarn:

"Burt began to bitterly berate the 'bull' about the bonus bill, bewailing the benighted bigotry of the belligerent birds, badly blocking the bonus by bombastic blusterings and brabble, and branding the busted bucks who bore the brunt of the battle as badgers and booty-burglars of billions in bonds, believed by big, bald business brow-beaters to belong buried in banks.

"Before our bewildered Burt boarded a boat to become a battle-scarred vet beyond the borders of our bright, beautiful, big country, he became a benedict; and, back from the battles, busted and barren of bullion, our benighted boy hero became beautifully bored because big bibulous bunco men breathlessly built a bunch of back-hand lies to bribe him by a bunk promise of a bonus.

"But Burt isn't badly brow-beaten by the bedraggled babble of a bonus. Blythe, buoyant and bubbling, biding his time, Burt, the benedict and battle buddy, and Beulah, his bride, believe the bully and bumptious idea that a beneficent bunch of birds will be brought to believe that big battles beat the Boche and busted bucks need bread; and before beaucoup belated years pass a bonus bill to bring the bacon back to our buddy, Burt.

SUFFERING OF A LIFETIME ENDED

"Words Can't Express Gratitude I Feel Toward Tanlac," Says Mrs. Burrington.

"From childhood until I got Tanlac, I suffered from indigestion and stomach trouble," said Mrs. J. A. Burrington, 540 Stanford Ave., Los Angeles.



MRS. J. A. BURRINGTON
Los Angeles, Calif.

Calif., "and that's been a long time, for I'm now in my sixty-eighth year. I remember when I was a child I was kept on a strict diet of lime water and milk for weeks and I have been in constant distress all these years. I suffered terribly from bloating and had to be very careful of what I ate. I became so weak and nervous I could hardly go about my housework and was in a miserable condition.

"About two years ago my husband got such splendid results from Tanlac he insisted on my taking it and the medicine wasn't but a little while in ridding me of my troubles. It gave me a splendid appetite, and I could enjoy a good hearty meal, even things I hadn't dare touch before, without any fear of it troubling me.

"Then I had the influenza and became dreadfully sick and weak, but my stomach kept in good order and it only took four bottles of Tanlac to build me up again to where I'm now feeling better than at any time I can remember. I have gained eleven pounds in weight, too, and words can't express the gratitude I feel toward Tanlac. I keep Tanlac in the house all the time now, for I know it is a medicine that can be depended upon." Tanlac is sold by leading druggists everywhere.—Adv.

Jazz Effect.

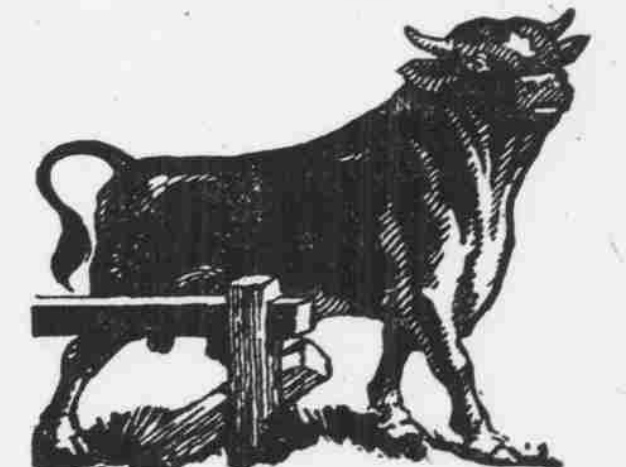
"I like your jazz orchestra," "I have no jazz orchestra," said the proprietor of the beanery.

"Huh?" "But I guess we do have more rattling of dishes than any joint in town."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

The roadstead of Callao, the port of Lima, Peru, is regarded as one of the safest in the world.

Baboons sometimes throw stones at their enemies.

Do you know you can roll 50 good cigarettes for 10 Cts from one bag of



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"BULL" DURHAM
TOBACCO

The American Tobacco Co.

Agents Make \$3 an Hour Selling our new novelties. Women everywhere buy on sight. Easy seller; 100% profit; sample 25c; write today. Argo Novelty Co., Lancaster, Pa.

KILL RATS TODAY



By Using the Genuine
STEARNS' ELECTRIC PASTE
The guaranteed "killer" for Rats, Mice, Cockroaches, Ants and Waterbugs—the greatest known carriers of disease. They destroy both food and property. Stearns' Electric Paste forces these pests to run from the building for water and fresh air.
READY FOR USE—BETTER THAN TRAPS
Directions in 15 languages in every box.
Two sizes, 8c and \$1.00. Enough to kill 50 to 400 rats. U. S. Government buys it.